

## Finalists for the 2016 Vic Hellard Jr. Award

*The 2016 Vic Hellard Jr. Award will honor a former nonpartisan Legislative Research Commission staff member who exemplified high standards in service to the Kentucky General Assembly. The award is named in memory and recognition of longtime LRC Director Vic Hellard Jr., who was a champion of legislative independence and played an instrumental role in the modernization of the legislative institution and nonpartisan staffing.*



**Joyce Honaker** served on the LRC staff from 1971 until 2003, with much of that time spent as the Committee Staff Administrator of the State Government Committee. During several decennial redistricting efforts, she was the leader of a large team of analysts, map drawers, secretaries and others who assisted as lawmakers drew boundaries for legislative districts. Honaker's bill-drafting proficiency, research abilities and policy analysis skills were well-known in the Legislative Branch. She was one of the founding members of the National Conference of State Legislature's Research and Committee Staff Section (RACSS) in 1987 and served two terms as its chair. In 1997, Honaker received one of the first Legislative Staff Achievement Awards given by RACSS. She was also selected by NCSL to travel abroad to

work with staff in newly developing democracies/republics in Namibia, Nigeria and a consultant to government staff in Hong Kong. The letter nominating her for the Vic Hellard Jr. Award, states Honaker "was a role model for both new and veteran LRC staff alike, and an invaluable source of knowledge, inspiration, and encouragement."

**Scott Payton** helped establish strong lines of communication between state lawmakers and citizens across the state during the 20-plus years that he worked in the LRC Public Information Office, including nine years as the agency's Public Information Officer. During his tenure, Payton guided the modernization of LRC's communications office and nurtured its growth into one of the most respected of its kind in the nation. Payton pushed to make sure Kentuckians knew what was going on in their Legislature, believing that government works best when connections between policymakers and constituents are strong. Known as a gifted writer, he was the recipient of numerous newswriting awards from the Kentucky Association of Government Communicators. A 2012 column in The Courier-Journal praised Payton's weekly legislative wrap-ups, which were distributed to newspapers across the state, as "scrupulously fair and balanced" pieces that "present relevant information in an elegant and entertaining way." Payton mentored many of today's top state government communicators. As noted in the nomination letter for the Vic Hellard Jr. Award: "He taught by example a commitment to nonpartisanship and the belief that we were doing worthwhile, inspirational work."



**Ginny Wilson** served in a number of top roles at the LRC during her career from 1987 to 2009. She was hired at the LRC as Staff Economist in 1987 and advanced to become the Chief Economist and Staff Administrator for the Program Review and Investigations Committee. A key goal of hers in both positions was to make the research reports produced by those offices as accessible as possible to a general audience. While the reports won national awards, the bigger payoff was that legislators and any interested people gained access to competent, unbiased research on a wide range of critical policy issues. Wilson became the LRC's Deputy Director for Research and Finance in 2006. From 2002 to 2003, she served as Deputy Director for Budget Review. Wilson retired from the LRC in 2009,

teaching as a part-time professor at UK until 2015. She also served the Consensus Forecasting Group, the official source of revenue estimates for the state budget, from 2005 to 2012. As noted in the letter nominating Wilson for the Vic Hellard Jr. Award: "Ginny's career epitomizes what Mr. Hellard stood for and what this award is about; her working life has been about public service. ... Through her wisdom, worth ethic and compassion, she not only does great work of her own, she makes those around her better."